

Koenings' Reeded Edge Half Newsletter #25

May 15, 2021

Dear Reeded Edge Half Collector:

2nd Census Update

Thank you for the great response to my request for Census information. I still need to hear from several major players but now have records of 40 collections. One of the benefits of these records is the fact that I can now determine a new order of rarity. This order of rarity is based on this 2021 Census combined with the Census in 2018 and my personal experience. Below you will see are the Top 28 die marriages of Reeded Edge Half Dollars in the order of their difficulty in finding:

Top 28 Die Marriages

Rank	Die Marriage	Estimated Number Known
1	1839-O GR-3	1
2	1839-O GR-2	2
3	1838-O GR-1	9
4	1839 GR-1	11
5	1838 GR-5	15 Confirmed
6	1837 GR-25	31 to 46
7	1839 GR-2	31 to 46
8	1839 GR-3	31 to 46
9	1837 GR-1	47 to 63
10	1839-O GR-5	81 to 120
11	1839-O GR-4	81 to 120
12	1838 GR-16	121 to 160
13	1837 GR-10	121 to 160
14	1838 GR-7	121 to 160
15	1837 GR-16	121 to 160
16	1837 GR-8	121 to 160
17	1837 GR-11	121 to 160*

* Listed as R-5 in Graham's book – may still be R-5 in higher grades

Top 28 Die Marriages (cont.)

Rank	Die Marriage		Estimated Number Known
18	1838	GR-12	121 to 160
19	1837	GR-19	161 to 200
20	1837	GR-20	161 to 200
21	1837	GR-6	161 to 200
22	1839	GR-6	161 to 200
23	1838	GR-2	161 to 200
24	1838	GR-14	161 to 200
25	1837	GR-15	201 to 240
26	1837	GR-4	201 to 240
27	1839	GR-8	201 to 240
28	1838	GR-10	241 to 300

The remaining 28 die marriages are very common, rated R-3 (201 to 500 known) to R-1 (over 1,000 known)

Many new Reeded Edge Half collectors start by looking for the Top 18 Rarest (R-4 and rarer), however, this 2021 Census has revealed some surprising information about several R-2's (501 to 1,000 known). So don't be surprised if you have a hard time finding the following die marriages in decent condition:

1837 GR-24	only 8 reported in 2021
1837 GR-21	only 9 reported in 2021
1838 GR-8	only 9 reported in 2021
1837 GR-12	only 9 reported in 2021
1837 GR-23	only 10 reported in 2021
1837 GR-7	only 11 reported in 2021

Out of 12 die marriages listed as R-1 (over 1,001 known) in Graham's book, one stands out as being difficult to find as follows:

1837 GR-18	only 10 reported in 2021
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In comparison, the most common R-1 reported is as follows:

1839-O GR-1	22 reported in 2021
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The above information is Preliminary.

Next month's Newsletter will show the Preliminary Top 15 collections in 2021 plus have an attachment that will allow all those that reported their census to see where they stand. In order to make next month's Newsletter, I must have all additions for the Preliminary by May 31, 2021. After that date, you may still make additions and they will appear in the J R Journal in late 2021, possibly November or December, for the Final 2nd Census.

Please send your Census to:

Jim Koenings at bustcoin1@verizon.net

You may also fax your Census info to (951) 242-1858

or you may mail a hard copy to:

**Jim Koenings
P.O. Box 2382
Riverside, CA 92516**

Commentary

It has always been my intention to educate collectors further in the study of Reeded Edge Halves. Normally, I try report such topics as follows:

1. The 38 most common die marriages (started August 2019, on a monthly basis)
2. The results of recent auction sales of R-4 and rarer die marriages
3. Have photos of interesting die stages
4. Give updates on the 2nd Census for Reeded Edge Halves

Comparison of 1838 GR-5 and GR-6 Reverses

Last month, I purchased an 1838 GR-6 in NGC AU58 that had an unusual die stage. Most 1838 GR-6's have a complete ALF on the reverse. Some of the later die stages have a die break that starts at the first S in STATES and goes eventually to the period after DOL. Starting in June 2021, I will be covering the Top 12 Most Common 1838 Die Marriages. When I get to 1838 GR-6, I will show various die stages of that die marriage and you will have a better understanding of why the following 1838 GR-6 is so important.

The reverse of 1838 GR-5, normally has a die break on the reverse that starts at rim under the 2nd arrowhead and goes in a circular manner, across the shield and eventually ends at the U in UNITED. **All 1838 GR-5's have a weak ALF on the reverse.**



1838 GR-5 NGC AU details Reverse with Early Die Stage

The above photo shows an Early Die Stage of 1838 GR-5, without the normal arching die break across the reverse. So far, out of the **15 confirmed** specimens, there is a 100% die break known as “Early Sunrise” that starts at the rim under the 2nd arrowhead and continues across the shield ending at the rim below U in UNITED. Specimens are also known with a 75% break that ends under the left wing, 50% break that ends at the left border of the shield and a 0% as shown above. The only die stage not seen is the 25% that will probably end at the right border of the shield. There is a die line, near the top of the shield that is seen under Stripe 4 (you may need a glass to see).

1838 GR-5 and 1838 GR-6 both share the same obverse with 1838 GR-5 being the first use and 1838 GR-6 being the 2nd use.



1838 GR-6 NGC AU58 Reverse

Although the ALF on the above coin appears to be weak, it is not the same as the 1838 GR-5 shown on the previous page. Perhaps one of the main features of 1838 GR-6 is that it has a partially filled M, whereas 1838 GR-5 doesn't. There are several die stages of 1838 GR-6, the one above appears to have a weak UNITED (I have seen several specimens with a weak UNITED). Later the GR-6 die marriage is lapped causing the olive stem to be very weak and later has the crack from the first S in STATES to the period after DOL.

It is only the above die stage that some collectors may misattribute as an 1838 GR-5, because of the weak ALF. **You may notice on the 1838 GR-5, the LF is almost totally gone** (typical of all 1838 GR-5's).

38 Most Common Die Marriages (continued)

Since August 2019, I have shown photos and information on the 1836 GR-1 die marriage and 18 of the 19 Most Common Die Marriages for the year 1837.

April 15, 2021's Newsletter #24, I presented information and photos on the 1837 GR-23 die marriage. I will now discuss the final Most Common die marriage for 1837, GR-24.

1837 GR-24

This die marriage was originally described as being JR-27 in Jules Reiver's Variety Identification Manual (VIM) in 1988.

The 1837 GR-24 die marriage is common and rated R-2 (501 to 1,000 known). It is composed of Obverse 18 (1st and only use) and Reverse V (also, 1st and only use). Graham lists a census of 65, 65, 65, 65, 65, 64, 64, 64, 64, 64, 63, 63 and 63, published in 2012. In my Reeded Edge Half Dollar Census, reported in the November 2018 John Reich Journal, I had 64, 62, 62, 61, 61, 50, 40, 30 and 30 that were reported by JRCS and Bust Half Nut members.

Dick Graham states in his book "I have seen a few GR-24's with an oversized and extended planchet, the reason for which I have not been able to ascertain, so keep an eye out for one of these in your searches. The planchet size will be 1.245", the reverse dentils will be elongated and stretched to a shallow rim, and the legend will be drawn and thinner. The enlarged planchet size is what will bring them to your attention first and foremost." It should be noted that the normal planchet size is 1.217".

Since today, most higher grade coins are certified, it makes measuring these coins very difficult.

On the obverse, the dentils are disconnected from the rim (Dick says there is a depression between the dentils and rim).

In the date, the 7 is level with 183 and evenly spaced. There is a squiggly die line up to the left from the joint of neck and chest. For some strange reason, Stars 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are flat with no central detail on most coins.



1837 GR-24 PCGS MS63 EDS Obverse – Courtesy of Heritage

The above photo appears to show an Earlier Die Stage of 1837 GR-24. Even on this specimen the Stars 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are very flat. This coin may have a planchet diameter of 1.217” whereas the specimen shown on the next page appears to be the larger size of 1.245 as it’s reverse looks extended with longer dentils.



1837 GR-24 PCGS MS64 LDS Obverse – Courtesy of Heritage

The above photo appears to be a Later Die Stage of 1837 GR-24 and on a larger planchet than the previous obverse. Again, Stars 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are flat with almost no detail. There is an obvious trough between the rim and dentils, especially over Stars 3 through 6. The above specimen also has signs of what Jules Reiver described as “Clash marks cause lumps in front of lips, with lines up to left from lips and upper chin. Clash marks up from bust. Lines down to left and right from jaw, throat and neck”.



1837 GR-24 PCGS MS64 LDS Reverse – Courtesy of Heritage

The above photo appears to show a Later Die Stage of 1837 GR-24 as the dentils look to be extended, especially on the left side of the coin, meaning that this coin is on a larger planchet. This coin also appears to have a vertical die line up from top of the left wing and a horizontal line just above the valley of the left wing with the eagle's neck. (both Reiver and Graham mention this in their books).

Next month in Newsletter #26, I will be starting the 12 Most Common 1838 Die Marriages, showing photos and information on the 1838 GR-1 die marriage. 1838 is my favorite year and I am sure it will be yours as there are only 16 known die marriages for the year. Only the 1838 GR-5 will be very difficult to find. Two months ago, I was able to find 15 of the 16 die varieties on eBay, even though 3 are rated R-4 (76 to 200 known).

Additional Commentary

I invite readers of this Newsletter to provide me with pictures and information about your rare finds so I can feature them in a future Newsletter.

Again, If you have any comments about Reeded Edge Half dollars that I might include in future Reeded Edge Half Newsletters, please email me at or send them to:

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Riverside, CA 92516

JRCS

I strongly recommend that all collectors join JRCS. JRCS publishes its J R Journal normally about 3 times a year. There is so much you can learn from the many articles that are published, including New Discoveries, Census Information on early silver issues, mint processes, die stage information and more. Membership is just \$25 per year. Anyone interested may contact W. David Perkins at wdperki@attglobal.net .

LSCC

I also strongly recommend that collectors interested in Liberty Seated Coins join LSCC. LSCC publishes its Gobrecht Journal 3 times a year. They also have their E-Gobrecht Monthly Newsletter that is published by Paul Kluth. Membership is just \$25 per year. Anyone interested may contact Jeff Ball at jeffballphoto@gmail.com .